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CHALLENGE

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

RULERS' NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
PREPARE FOR MORE LETHAL WARS

BHUTTO MURDER UNDERMINES U.S. EMPIRE

Benazir Bhutto's assassination and subsequent chaos in nuclear-armed Pakistan seriously set back U.S. plans for continuing control of the strategic region, especially of oil's grand prize, Saudi Arabia. U.S. rulers had hoped that Harvard-educated Bhutto could heal the ruling-class split between her land-holding family's faction and that of Musharraf's military and initiate more vigorous attacks on Pakistan-based al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Those who murdered Bhutto — and simultaneously scores of workers — dashed that dream and strengthened the forces of Osama bin Laden, who's almost certainly hiding in Pakistan. Bin Laden represents the non-royal sector of Saudi capitalists who are using unconventional violence to seize the oil bonanza the princes deny them.

Bhutto's killers' uncertain identity further underscores U.S. shakiness in its "ally" Pakistan. Al Qaeda and the Taliban are prime suspects but many blame Pakistan's pro-Islamist Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) and fault Musharraf himself for not adequately protecting Bhutto. In any event, the killing reflects U.S. imperialism's tendency to create one crisis by trying to solve another.

All the possible culprits sport a "Made-in-the-U.S.A." label. Al Qaeda and the Taliban grew out of the U.S-led campaign to arm Islamists against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The ISI became powerful by helping run this operation. And the U.S. has built up Musharraf's military with gifts totaling $10 billion meant to "combat terror" but diverted to the power-hungry generals' own purposes.

Fight For Oil Sharpens

The grim Pakistan situation represents but one of the many major challenges U.S. rulers will face in the new year. Iraq remains an unprofitable hellhole, despite claims of the surge's "success." With the oil majors still afraid to risk capital and personnel there, Iraqi crude production hovers around 2.4 million barrels a day (mbd), far short of U.S. bosses' goals. Actually, just before the 2003 invasion, the Establishment's Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and James A. Baker Institute had issued a report foreseeing a



six mbd windfall for Exxon Mobil and the rest.

Now Turkey's bosses, pursuing their own security needs, are making things even worse for their U.S. "allies": "Crude futures on the New York Mercantile Exchange soared past $96 per barrel...after Turkish warplanes hit alleged Kurdish rebel sites in northern Iraq....[T]raders fear that the rebels may respond by attacking oil pipelines in northern Iraq. (Energy Intelligence, 12/27/07) U.S. troops won't leave Iraq anytime soon, as Congressional Democrats keep writing the Pentagon blank checks.

Meanwhile, U.S. rivals are stepping up their military influence in the region. Iran almost simultaneously announced delivery of nuclear fuel from Russia and its purchase of a Russian air defense system. Furthermore, "Iran and Russia are in negotiations to expand military cooperation beyond air defenses, including attack helicopters and jet engines for a fleet of indigenous Iranian fighters. There have also been reports that Iran intends to purchase Russian Sukhoi Su-30 fighters." (Washington Post, 12/27/07)

China, whose thirst for oil puts it on a collision course with the U.S., is building a naval port for its new oil tanker-shepherding "blue water" navy at Gwadar, Pakistan. Gwadar commands the crucial Strait of Hormuz chokepoint through which virtually all seaborne crude from the Persian Gulf to East Asia must pass.

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Letter From the Iraq War

I'm doing fine, been very busy since last time I wrote. There's so much to write about. I'll start with the current condition of my sector. The army has allied with the local insurgent group. This is the same group that was blowing us up and shooting at us. It was formerly allied with Al Qaeda, but since the U.S. pays them more and gives them arms, they now supposedly fight Al Qaeda.

We've been walking around the villages and the city trying to find them, then put them in the "hide system," a machine that electronically reads fingerprints and retina scans, takes a picture and sends it to the Pentagon.

The Army pays them $250/month each and $350 to the leader of each house. They also have us passing out rice, flour, oil, books and backpacks.

Right now we're using the velvet glove, but the iron fist isn't far off. This has led to intense discussions about why we're here; why the U.S. is allying with the insurgency and now supporting the Sunni faction and fueling the civil war between Sunni and Shia. Would U.S. rulers support al Qaeda if it was in their best interest to do so? [After all, in the 1980s the CIA financed bin Laden and AQ to fight the Soviet army in Afghanistan]

We've been involved in a lot of fighting — many attacks against us and our unit has attacked many people. There is some death-squad mentality in my unit. A vocal group is swayed by the racist attitudes of Special Forces around our platoon.

I "came out of the closet," so to speak, so now everyone in my platoon knows about my politics. This has led to some heated debate and has been a good experience for me. I've taken on some of the racist ideas about the Iraqis with the other people in my unit. Being here and interacting with the local people has also made me challenge some of my own ideas about ethnic stereotypes.

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2007: Rival Imperiaists Challenged U.S. – *Workers Fought Back Worldwide*

World domination by U.S. rulers is being challenged by the bosses of Russia, Iran and China. This sharpening rivalry is displayed in many ways. Pick up a mainstream U.S. newspaper any time and the message you most likely receive is that China is evil. News sources reported all year about the dangerous or poisonous products of China: from pet chow to toothpaste, from toys to sea food. The mouthpieces of the ruling class were determined to paint China as the devil, even though U.S.-owned companies produced the goods in question.

A communist analysis tells us that the bosses' reason for this is not concern for our safety. They fear China's growing ability to compete with the U.S. as an imperialist power, and they need to build up anti-China sentiment in workers in anticipation of future armed conflict.

The U.S. rivalry with China and other growing powers drove many of the events of the year, either directly or indirectly. The Save Darfur movement is being built among students and workers in order to oppose China's interests in Africa. Hugo Chavez of Venezuela is able to call George Bush names without much fear, partly because of his ties to imperialists in China, Russia and elsewhere. Over a million people have been killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan waged by U.S. bosses to prevent rivals from gaining access to Mid-East oil.

The year 2007 saw the outbreak of rebellions by Arab and Muslim youth in France and mass strikes in France, South Africa, Peru, Italy and the Dominican Republic and a general strike in Greece. Workers in the United States have fought back with strikes in war plants at Northrop-Grumman in Pascagoula, Mississippi and at Navistar. Although those workers struck for economic reasons, striking war plants shows that they did not fall for the boss's patriotism. PLP supported these strikers and helped expose the pro-boss union hacks still holding back our class. PLP'ers have also been organizing in the military and in subcontracting plants serving the war industry.

The lead-up to the next presidential election was big news as Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton jockeyed for the Democratic Party nomination, each hoping to convince workers of their anti-war stance while assuring Big Oil that they would do a better job than Bush at securing control of the Middle East. Both Obama and Clinton have openly supported pre-emptive strikes against al Qaeda in Pakistan and the Iranian rulers respectively.

In mass events, PLP'ers — through chants, speeches and sales of CHALLENGE — have consistently exposed the liberal politicians as more dangerous as they try to win worker support with their lies while deepening the wars their "conservative" counterparts started.

Meanwhile, the current government used the "war on terror" to excuse increasingly fascist tactics in oppressing the workers. We saw a rise in the use of video cameras everywhere, from schools to buses. Police murdered black and Latin young people in every major city like Kiel Coppin in NYC, Francisco Mondragon in LA and Aaron Harrison in Chicago. Brutal crackdowns on immigrants, like the raid at a plant in New Bedford, Mass., separated families through deportation at the same time that immigration "reforms" like the DREAM Act promise citizenship to those who would join the military to fight in the Middle East. The bosses have worked hard this year to build fear and passivity in the workers, but they face a major contradiction: they are attacking the same people they need to be patriotic and fight their imperialist wars.

PL was there to lead militant, multi-racial protests against gutter racists like the Minutemen. We stood up against racist right-wingers like David Horowitz with his Islamo-Fascism week and against military and CIA recruiters on our campuses.

The local courts in Jena, LA, viciously punished young black students who fought back against racists who hung nooses at their school. Since then the media has reported that racist attacks are on the rise. As the NY Times reported (11/25), "…this country has seen a rash of as many as 50 to 60 noose incidents. The level of hate crimes in the U.S. is astoundingly high — more than 190,000 incidents per year." Masses of black workers and students converged on Jena, LA, to protest the racist events there. PL members brought communist politics to these anti-racist events.



General Strike In Greece

The rulers left workers to suffer in many ways while they struggled to keep control over their imperialist interests. The sub-prime mortgage crisis meant many workers, disproportionately black and Latino ones, lost homes and financial security. Bridges collapsed, miners died in cave-ins, homes and lives were lost to fires and floods, earthquakes from San Diego to Tabasco, Mexico, to Peru, the Caribbean and Bangladesh. The wreckage left in the wake of hurricane Katrina is in even worse shape after two years of the bosses' "recovery effort." The bosses have decided to demolish the public housing which were totally livable.

No matter how much the bosses abandon all responsibility for our safety, workers take care of each other. Students, teachers and workers are still traveling to the New Orleans area to lend support to their class brothers and sisters there. PLP contingents made the trip several times during the year, organizing our friends to help in schools, churches, community groups and workplaces.

High school students spoke to the Delegate Assembly of the New York teachers' union for the first time, demanding that their voices be heard against imperialist war. On the West Coast, high school and college students spent their summer building unity with industrial workers.

Even as the bosses try to beat us down and win us to their nationalist ideas, the workers' anger is still there. It's the job of communists to give this anger at the system a revolutionary direction. We don't want to rebel fruitlessly, but to build a movement that will be able to challenge and destroy capitalism. Then workers will be able to run the world according to our class interests. PLP is leading the way towards that communist future. ✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

✯Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world.

✯Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.

✯Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✯Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

✯Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✯Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✯Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One International working class, one world, one Party.

✯Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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South Asian Worker Joins the International PLP

Recently on a trip to a South Asian country I had an experience that brought home so strongly to me that communist ideas are deeply embedded in the working class worldwide, over-riding apparent barriers of geographic origin, gender and language.

I, a jean-clad Western woman, was sitting with a traditionally-dressed Muslim male neither speaking each other's language. After a few minutes of awkwardness and pantomime trying to communicate, the comrade who had brought us together joined us and interpreted for us.

First the comrade told me that he and his friends had not been in touch for two years and that the man had previously been close to PLP and was now ready to join.

The friend began talking about the situation in the area, where the working class is caught up in conflict based on ethnic and regional differences. He went straight to the point, saying, "Our aim is a classless society, but to get rid of the bosses we need to overcome these barriers and unite the working class in one struggle. We can do this. The opportunity is there but the difficulty is our lack of resources and funds. Every member [and CHALLENGE reader] has to give money to support this work."

He continued, "We also need an international party, that if a worker suffers in one country it is felt in the heart of a worker in another country."

So, comrades, we do have an international party and this comrade inspired me to work harder to build it. ✪

A Comrade

Letter from Iraq
continued from front page

There is a lot of hostility towards my politics.

I'm arguing with the people in my platoon that the U.S. is the cause of much of the misery here. That we blew up the hospitals, power station and sewer systems so that people lie sick and shit runs in the streets. That we allow most of the food brought in as aid to be given out to pay off U.S. allies or to be sold on the black market. I've reminded them that we've blown up two schools since we've been here, and that there is no running water because we don't allow people to lay pipe. That our snipers are killing innocent people, and U.S. missiles are blowing up families.

These are some of the racist ideas I struggle over with them on a daily basis. On top of that, I've had discussions about the nature of capitalism and communism with some people, but that's been a touchy subject with many in the platoon.

It's been hairy, but I'm doing OK. I can't wait to see you guys, I will be home soon. Thanks for everything.

Bella Ciao, In Struggle

PLP Youth Lead Anti-Racist Campaign At Brooklyn H.S.

BROOKLYN, NY — Students, mainly black and Latino, and teachers at a local high school here — located in a predominantly white, middle-class neighborhood — have been battling racist attacks inside and outside the school. Every day after school the racist NYPD quickly herds students out of the neighborhood.

Before Thanksgiving, when an underage female student and her friends tried to leave a subway car because they feared a fight was about to erupt, a cop in that car yanked her back in. Her friends defended her, saying she'd done nothing wrong, that the cop's action was illegal. They wrote down his name and badge number. Seeing students stand up for each other angered this racist cop. When the train pulled into the next station, he ordered the young student out of the subway car.

Her friends, and passengers on the train, told her she didn't have to go because she'd done nothing wrong. But she went, fearing arrest and further abuse. About a dozen of her friends followed her, which angered the cop even more. He called for back-up; almost immediately a dozen racist cops came running down the stairs. They maced and beat the students, arresting six.

Four were underage and taken to the precinct and then to a juvenile detention center for the night, where they were further harassed and verbally brutalized with racist remarks. Three are CHALLENGE readers, which partially influenced their will to fight back.

When PLP members at the school, heard this story, we responded immediately, first calling the parents of those arrested. Consequently, we were able to accompany the students and their parents to a court hearing. The students, never offered legal aid, were instead offered a "deal": community service and a sealed conviction! Such is capitalist justice: get harassed, maced, beaten and locked up by racist cops — the "crime" being black or Latino.

PLP members encouraged and supported the parents to fight the case and demand a lawyer. Despite the DA's scare tactics, and because the parents had a prior relationship with the teacher/debate coach of their children, the parents resisted the "deal" and await a trial date.

Back at school, a PLP youth club took an anti-racist petition to the Student Government Association. It linked the racist attacks on the Jena 6, the NYPD's brutal murder of Kiel Coppin, the cops' racist attacks on students to the racist pizzeria owner across the street. Hundreds of signatures were collected the first day!

During the petition campaign, a debate on metal detectors in the school occurred before the entire student body. One side argued safety required having such detectors. The other side exposed the racist nature of these detectors. They eloquently explained that besides metal detectors being ineffective at catching many metal objects, the main reason to eliminate them was their use to teach control and obedience to authority.

One debater argued, "Although we all won't get 95's in all our classes or pass all the Regents exams needed for graduation, we will all leave this school knowing how to "assume the position." This shows that the main reason school exists is to train us to follow orders, like prisoners." (This fits in with the bosses' need for obedient cannon fodder in imperialist wars and for cheap labor.) Another debater used statistics from the NYC Lawyers' Union website revealing that 82% of students attending high schools containing metal detectors are black and Latino. Hundreds of students and many teachers wore stickers distributed at the debate, stating: "Students not Suspects! Fight Racism!"



FRANCE – Arab and Muslim working class youth rebelled against police terror.

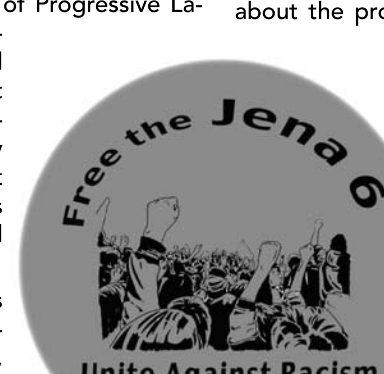
This modest increase of class struggle has helped expand our CHALLENGE distribution, though inconsistent, to 75 per issue. Two new students have joined a study group. Since one student's arrest and our response, she began meeting with a PLP study group again. She will attend the next PLP club meeting and has her mother's full support. Four PL student members have led the campaign.

Still, we must strengthen our organizing. The anti-racism campaign must include the Apartheid pizzeria owner across the street from the school; he refuses to allow our students to eat there. We're planning to more vigorously approach the building's other two schools; the petition is being passed around in one. We've also taken the petitions to mass organizations, provoking political discussion that's changed some of their thinking, increasing our experience in doing this.

The anti-racist campaign has not yet blossomed, but 2008 promises more opportunity to win these youths to the Party while advancing the class struggle within their schools.✪

Student Anti-Racist Assembly Sparks Fight-back

BROOKLYN, NY, December 19 — "Asian, Latin, black and white; to fight racism, we must unite!" was a chant among 800 high school students attending our second annual anti-racist assembly. It centered on the theme of the "Jena 6" and students fighting back. Members of Progressive Labor Party — understanding that racism is a crucial weapon in the capitalist arsenal against the working class — see one way of building the anti-racist fight is organizing mass assemblies in the school to spread our ideas.



The assembly was exciting from start to finish, with original poetry, a skit about battling racism, some great speeches linking past struggles to today and lively routines by cheerleaders and steppers. It called on students not only to wear the Jena 6 button (see insert) but to become active in the fight against racism. The high point was a slam poet's poem opposing the criminalization of students in the schools. It really hit home as students are increasingly treated like suspects and criminals.

The main lesson: always rely on the students and staff, especially the students. Everyone came through in a big way. Students had been meeting daily for over a month to plan every aspect of the assembly, from the program, the lighting, the music and the ushers to, most importantly, the message. We had lively discussions about the nature of racism, its history and what to do every day to challenge it.

A few teachers lent their support and attended all the discussions and planning meetings. Others were very enthusiastic about the program, thanking us for doing it.

But clearly, the students led this activity, armed with much determination and understanding. It was followed a week later by a debate in the cafeteria based on the Lerone Bennett article, "The Road Not Taken."

We've taken some important steps, especially to make racism a mass issue. Our sharp assembly was even better received than last year's program. Nationalism was minimal in organizing the assembly, but the administration's fear was evident. One weakness was the failure to link racism here to the U.S. rulers' imperialist wars which use racism to win GI's to kill their class brothers and sisters in Iraq and Afghanistan

Those who run the school are afraid of our students and of PLP's communist ideas. They understand their power and know that we can be a spark to lead rebellions. Our job is to continue this fight, explain the class nature of racism and our solution — and always rely on the working class! ✪

Opportunities to Build PLP After Navistar Union Hacks Sold Out

LOS ANGELES, December 30 — The UAW ended a seven-week strike against International Truck and Engine Corp. (ITEC), betraying the company's 3,700 workers. ITEC, a unit of Navistar International, based in Warrenville, Illinois, imposed increases in workers' out-of-pocket healthcare costs, as well as a new-hire package lowering wages and benefits.

When the Navistar contract expired October 1, the union refused to call a strike, even though workers were ready to go. The UAW leaders postponed the walkout until October 23, enabling the company to send the work to non-union plants in Mississippi, Texas and Mexico. This helped the company and its imperialist masters build the armored vehicles they needed to send immediately to the war in Iraq. In delaying the strike, the union leaders continued their role as junior partners of the bosses and their contempt for the workers' conditions. Their failure to reach out to workers in the non-union plants in the U.S. and Mexico exposes their pro-boss outlook as well.

However, PLP built strike support from Chicago to Southern California. We walked the picket lines. We passed out thousands of leaflets to workers calling for support for the strikers and for unity between workers in the U.S., Mexico and Iraq, between union and non-union, citizen and immigrant, black, Latin and white. Our leaflets explained that a revolutionary party is needed to answer the bosses' growing attacks on workers, which are part of widening imperialist war and deepening attacks on war-production workers. Workers need one international revolutionary communist party fighting to destroy the rule of profit and to establish the rule of workers.

Hundreds of workers showed their support by buying CHALLENGE and revealing the similarity of their own conditions with the Navistar workers. These discussions included some sharp struggle about racism. A few citizen workers wanted to blame immigrants for worsening conditions in the war-production plants, but PL'ers made it clear that it's capitalism's need to force workers to shoulder the bosses' drive for super-profits and for war, not immigrant workers, that is to blame.✪

Red Transit Workers Mean 'Doomsday' For the Bosses

CHICAGO, IL, December 27 — For the third time in five months, transit workers and riders are facing a "Doomsday"(see CHALLENGE, 11/14/07) deadline. The bosses are threatening to slash thousands of jobs, dozens of bus routes and other service cutbacks if a new 5-year concession contract and state funding are not in place by January 20. These are especially racist cutbacks as they target a mostly black work force that serves an even larger black and Latin population.

Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) boss Huberman admits that mass transit creates $2 billion in value added wealth to the local economy by bringing millions of riders to work, shopping and events. But that $2 billion goes into the vaults of the biggest bosses and bankers. We create the wealth and they keep it. That is the secret to capitalism. The attacks on transit workers, the riding public and para-transit users are taking place as the economy slides into a recession and federal funding is cut to pay for the $12 billion-a-month wars in Iraq and Afghanistan!

City and state politicians are fighting over how to fund mass transit. Mayor Daley, the CTA and the ATU locals want the matter settled with a 5-year concession contract that creates a permanent two-tier system, a fare hike to $3.00 and service cuts. The CTA and Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) sent the contract to arbitration to keep it from being voted on by transit workers. The contract will go into effect as soon as the state politicians vote on funding, but they are fighting to tie funding to casino gambling. As with the Cook County health care cuts a year ago that closed half of the public health clinics, closed wards and slashed hundreds of jobs, the city and state politicians are Democrats, black and white, elected with union money.

Daley and the CTA had the union leaders (ATU locals 308 – rail, and 241 – bus), call for a one-day "job action" on December 17. They wanted us to demand funding that would saddle us with the 5-year concession contract, force new hires to work 15 years longer before they can retire, and use our "raises" to fund the shaky pension plan.

Most transit workers smelled a rat and wanted no part of it. Others were frustrated and wanted to take some action, like the three-day strike of 500 para-transit drivers in November and the one-day strike of PACE drivers in early December.

Had this been the start of a real strike to stop fare hikes and service cuts, and win a decent contract, the media and the bosses would have threatened us with jail and fines. But we didn't hear a thing from them because they were behind it. Some workers notified the ATU International leadership and they threatened to put the ATU locals into trusteeship. The action was called off.

During this period, a group of transit workers took matters into their own hands, distributing a flier in several garages exposing the Daley-CTA-ATU charade. They called on workers to unite with riders to fight racist cutbacks. They got a very good response. As this struggle unfolds we have an opportunity to introduce more workers and transit activists to CHALLENGE newspaper and PLP. Communist revolution will be "doomsday" for the racist rulers, as we build a society that serves the needs of the international working class, not the bankers and casino operators.✪

Hacks' Phony 'Human Rights' Unit Kills Jena 6 Resolution

Seattle, WA — After nearly two months of struggle at various International Association of Machinists (IAM) union meetings and conferences, our rank-and-file Jena 6 support resolution was finally kicked upstairs to the District Human Rights committee. Last week, the Business Representative chairman informed us the committee decided to kill it. "If we supported this then anybody could come forward with his or her issues," he warned.

"That would be horrible" was the sarcastic reaction of many members on the shop floor. Then more serious discussions began. What is the purpose of these human rights committees anyway?

The network of Human Rights committees was started in the mid-'70s. At the time, the union was flooded with new younger members just back from the Vietnam War, with experience in anti-racist rebellions and familiarity with left-wing politics. These new members expected action against racism both on the job and in society at large. The leadership answered with a human rights committee in every local. Carefully controlled by the reactionary leadership, these committees served as the hacks' lightning rods. They diverted the efforts of honest anti-racists from militant class struggle into dead-end bureaucracy.

In our district, the activity of this committee is also driven by rank-and-file anti-racist struggle. But, once again, the misleadership used this committee to give an appearance of "diversity" while short-circuiting class struggle. The leadership even decided to cover their ass with diversity training for all union officers. Unfortunately, the International runs these classes. As explained by an International officer, diversity training is important to organizing. Their organizing slogan is "Defending Our Freedom; Defending Our Jobs." Their logo features a U.S. flag and an armed soldier.

The picture is complete. The International's version of Human Rights is multi-racial support for racist U.S. imperialism.

Communism: The Only Answer To Bosses' Racism

Under communism the PLP would bring workers into the street to battle racists. Racism hurts all workers; communism requires anti-racist working-class consciousness and unity. In order to ensure the victory of the revolution, we must muster our class's fighting might.

Today, with pro-capitalist unions, we have to expose the misleaders' phony Human Rights committees. In that sense, being attacked by the hacks in this struggle has not been such a bad thing. Our CHALLENGE sales have increased a bit as we have worked hard to bring communist ideas to our fellow workers who have lost faith in pro-capitalist unions. We now have to turn those sales into bigger CHALLENGE networks and new Party members.

Where possible, we should encourage honest workers to join these misleaders' committees. They should have no illusions about how far the hacks will let these committees mobilize rank-and-file class struggle. On the other hand, by pushing just such action, we can more profoundly expose the pro-boss union leadership.

As these struggles ensue, the revolutionary alternative will become more meaningful when we find ways to emphasize our communist politics.✪

Fresh Direct's Anti-Immigrant Attack Is Rotten to the Core

NEW YORK CITY, December 23 — Two recent stories show how the racist noose, Jena-style, is tightening around the necks of undocumented immigrants, thereby sharpening exploitation of all workers and intensifying fascist control in the U.S.

On December 20, two days before a vote to have the United Food and Commercial Workers Union represent warehouse workers at Fresh Direct here, a multi-racial group of unionists and community and church groups rallied to support them. The bosses at Fresh Direct, a rapidly-expanding company that raked in a $240 million profit in 2007, fired hundreds of undocumented workers. They had threatened the workers with deportation raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which the company had invited to the warehouse. Fresh Direct bosses are deliberately using ICE to divide and defeat the union drive.

A black worker, responding to an ad for a job there, encountered a comrade and later joined the rally. "I'm against deporting workers who've been working in the U.S. and dividing their families," he declared.

Our ability to fight exploitation and criminalization of undocumented workers depends on such an internationalist working-class outlook and an increasing willingness of all workers to fight back for our class, not on uniting with the politicians for so-called immigration reform. In fact, a key element of such "reform" will be a guest-worker program that will allow bosses like those at Fresh Direct to "legally" super-exploit and divide workers.

On December 13 about 80 people held a candlelight vigil sponsored by the New Sanctuary Movement (NSM) at Manhattan's ICE Center, where immigrants awaiting deportation are processed before being sent to detention centers. Nearly two million people have been deported in the last decade; ICE detains more than 280,000 a year.

The NSM flyer exposed the fact that "New York City collaborates with ICE in many ways: In 2006 the City's Dept. of Corrections received over $18 million from the federal government in exchange for targeting non-citizens, more that any other city in the country….Without revealing their identities, ICE officers routinely question and then detain suspected non-citizens caught up in the criminal justice system, many of whom have yet to be convicted or even charged with a crime."

The New Sanctuary stance to protest in the streets against raids and racist terror is a welcome development. But the struggle must sharpen. Immediately after the vigil participants arrived, a handful of gutter racists from Morristown, NJ appeared with whistles, American flags and signs saying, "Deport them all." A comrade chanted in their faces. "We are workers, we're not illegals," trying to win the protestors to stand up to the racists. A few protesters joined her, but most chose to ignore them, saying, "Don't worry. Our message is stronger than theirs."

The comrade pointed out that allowing such racists to go unchallenged permits the growth of violent racism that historically results in fascist genocide. She explained how Morristown racists throw rocks and bottles at day laborers in New Jersey and work with politicians like Morristown Mayor Crisitelli and Colorado Senator Tancredo. But while Tancredo proclaims he's made "immigration a front-burner issue," it's the liberal ruling class that's primarily behind the legalization of fascist treatment of immigrants.

They don't want to deport most of the undocumented immigrants, just enough to terrorize them and all workers in order to super-exploit them even more. These liberals want to use the so-called Dream Act to force undocumented youth to serve as cannon fodder in their imperialist wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, and militarize the U.S./Mexico border, all in the name of "national security." A couple of the comrade's good friends later told her they agreed with her and that we need to discuss the issue in the Sanctuary group.

History teaches us that capitalism is built on racist exploitation and that defeating fascist terror requires a revolutionary communist party. PLP'ers join mass organizations like the Sanctuary Movement to bring these ideas to workers and their allies. ✪

Paraguay's Electoral Circus Offers No Solution for Workers



Fairly soon Paraguayan workers will be asked to choose a new oppressor. The candidates, serving different capitalist interests, essentially all favor the exploitation of the working class and its allies. Instead of choosing a "lesser evil," it's time to organize a revolutionary communist movement to free workers from all forms of capitalist and imperialist oppression.

Paraguay is a key piece in the larger chessboard of imperialist domination and cheap labor in South America. Its ruling class has kept the population, many of them indigenous, super-exploited and very poor. Paraguay has one of the hemisphere's largest aquifers [underground water supply] and is strategically located, bordering Brazil and Argentina, the two giants of the "Southern Cone," as well as Bolivia and Uruguay. So the elections must be seen in the context of the growing imperialist rivalry in Latin America.

The Pentagon is trying to activate the Mariscal Estigarribia airport in the Chaco region, a very short distance by air from Bolivia. The latter is now on the brink of a civil war between very racist pro-U.S. forces in the rich gas and oil region of Santa Cruz against pro-Chávez President Evo Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous president. Energy companies from Brazil, Spain, China, Venezuela, India, France, Great Britain and the U.S. are all interested in controlling the region's oil and gas wealth.

Recently, several U.S. Senators and Congressmen made a five-country tour of Latin America, starting in Paraguay. Meanwhile, Brazil's bosses — who exploit Paraguay's natural resources and cheap labor — are supporting former general and presidential candidate Lino Oviedo.

Contrary to all the capitalist parties, PLP and our friends here, even though small in number, offer the only alternative: organizing workers across all borders — including the large number of Paraguayan immigrants in Brazil, Argentina, the U.S. and Spain — to fight all bosses and imperialists, for a world without capitalism: communism.

The Electoral Players — All Capitalist Stooges

The ruling Colorado Party, in power for over 60 years, is now split between two candidates. Blanca Ovelar recently resigned as Minister of Education to escape striking teachers, and hit the campaign trail. Current Coloradan Vice-President Castiglioni is also running. Former bishop Fernando Lugo of the Christian Democratic Party, allied with the reformist pro-Chávez PMAS party, has formed a coalition with the Liberal Party, the main opposition to the Coloradoans, choosing a liberal as his V-P running mate. Pedro Fadul left the "Anything-but-Colorado" Lugo camp to run for President as the Dear Fatherland Party candidate.

President Frutos of the Colorado Party freed the jailed General Oviedo, after dropping treason charges against him (for murdering a former Vice-president), enabling him to run and split the opposition. Oviedo graduated from the U.S. School of the Americas which trains Latin America death squads.

Lugo — As Bad As the Rest

Lugo, who leads the polls, has much support from workers and peasants because he has backed the poor farmers' movement. But he's turning out to be a "socialist" á la Chile's President Bachelet, a close U.S. ally and darling of Chilean bosses. Lugo has already visited the U.S. trying to win Washington's support, pledging not to interfere with Wal-Mart's recent opening here. Even if elected, Lugo is already entangled in a web of deals with very reactionary parties. Little will change for urban and rural workers if Lugo wins.

We in PLP must use DESAFIO-CHALLENGE to build our movement here, as the only true liberation for workers and their allies.

Bhutto Murder Undermines U.S. Empire

continued from front page

NEXT PRESIDENT'S MAIN JOB: MOBILIZE FOR ALL-OUT OIL WAR

Both before and after 9/11, CHALLENGE constantly said that the U.S. would launch a war for control of the greater Middle East and its oil. Before 9/11, reporting on the Hart-Rudman commission that foresaw a terrorist attack on U.S. soil, we specifically said such an attack would precede a U.S. invasion of the Mid-East beginning in Iraq. Now U.S. rulers themselves admit as much. Richard Haass, president of the rulers' CFR — when asked about the next U.S. president's main task — said, "The greater Middle East represents the greatest collection of challenges that continue to face the U.S." (Nikkei News, 12/13/07) Haass charged the next president with militarizing the nation for deadlier wars. "[W]e have to expand the size of the U.S. military....[I]t is quite possible that a lot of uses of military will be manpower-intensive....And it now looks more [like] the current Iraq war is going to be the model of future wars."

Making Bhutto a martyr for wider conflict, White House hopeful Barack Obama called her "a respected...advocate for the democratic aspirations of the Pakistani people." Hillary Clinton also glorified Bhutto, "The world is once again reminded of the dangers facing those who pursue democracy."

But Bhutto was, in fact, no angel. She, like her U.S. backers, stood for nothing more than capitalism's utterly unprincipled, relentless pursuit of profit (See box below). In the ranks of departed foreign standard-bearers for U.S. imperialism, she joins Saddam Hussein, the Shah of Iran and countless Latin American dictators, from Pinochet to Somoza to Trujillo to Battista.

Obama, Clinton, and the rest of the liberals praising Bhutto are selling political poison. Far better than following them down the road to imperialist world war would be to join and build the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party. We have the ultimate goal of eradicating the profit system and its endless wars and establishing workers' rule in their place. ✪

Bhutto Was Workers' Deadly Enemy

Benazir Bhutto was no friend of the working class. She belonged to the aristocracy of the Pakistani ruling class in particular and to the worldwide capitalist ruling class in general. Under her premiership the Pakistani state apparatus, one of the world's most repressive, continued its brutal practices of torturing, killing and "disappearing" workers and those who opposed her rule.

Even her younger brother Murtaza was mowed down by the police, which many (including her niece Fatima) believe Bhutto either engineered or tacitly approved. A member of parliament, he was a vocal critic of his sister's politics and her corrupt government.

She, her husband, mother and other family members became obscenely rich from laundering money, getting kickbacks, customs inspection fees and outright stealing funds from social programs. Her husband and she accumulated a $1.5 billion fortune while over 80 million Pakistani workers and peasants live on less than $2 a day. ✪

KENYA: Imperialist-Sponsored 'Democracy' Blows Up

NAIROBI, Kenya, Jan. 2 — Kenya was considered the most stable capitalist democracy in this part of Africa and a gold mine for imperialist exploitation, but the violence following the rigged presidential election last week has blown all that. Kenya is too important for world imperialism not to try to squash a power struggle between two politicians that could turn into another Rwanda. The two candidates are using tribal politics in their fight but in reality their thirst for a bigger piece of the capitalist pie is behind this conflict. The two men became enemies after Kibaki (the current ruler) reneged on a 2002 deal that would have given Odinga (the opposition candidate claiming fraud) the premiership in return for his support in the election.

Kenya's importance to the imperialists is as a regional base for multi-national corporations like Barclays Bank, British American Tobacco and Unilever, among others who viciously exploit African workers. Its port of Mombassa is crucial to transport manufactured goods, fuel and military equipment for Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and southern Sudan. Financial Times columnist Michael Holman, wrote (1/1/08)): "For the outside world, Kenya has been the acceptable face of Africa: a safe destination for a million tourists a year from Europe, Asia and North America to the country of surf and safari; a reliable base, in a tough neighbourhood, for a burgeoning aid industry; regional headquarters for the United Nations; and — less well-known — a country whose military pacts with the U.S. and Britain have made it a crucial ally in the 'war against terror.' Kenyan politics, however, has never been healthy. It has been dominated by ethnic allegiances, stained by assassination, distorted by one-party rule until 1991 and, above all, oiled by endemic corruption." These are central features of worldwide capitalism.

The U.S. government wanted the situation to remain stable enough to have congratulated Kibaki for his "victory," even though it's common knowledge it was fraudulent. Then, on Dec. 31, Washington effectively retracted that initial position with a fresh statement expressing concern about "serious problems experienced during the vote-counting process."

The instability of world capitalism, with its imperialist wars, economic crises, corruption and fascist terror, is deadly for workers and their allies in Kenya, Pakistan, Iraq and more "hot spots" that will surely arise in the future. This instability sharpens the divisions among workers and their allies along tribal, religious and national lines. These contradictions cannot be solved under capitalism. The world's workers are in dire need of rebuilding an international revolutionary communist movement that unites our class and allies based on our common interests to fight our common enemy: capitalism, imperialism and their crooked politicians.✪

LETTERS

Asian Youth Wants to Serve Working Class

(*This is a letter from a young working-class comrade whose family was made homeless in one of the many natural disasters turned into mass tragedies by capitalism in Asia in recent years. He is a first-year college student and sent us these comments on the situation for working-class youth like him.*)

The rich people put drugs into our communities. They want to keep us down. They deprive us of an education and jobs. It's our duty to get an education because we need it for the future of the working class. All students have to get involved in the struggle of the working class so that we can get rid of the rich people's system. We can do this if we unite the ranks of the working class here and all over the world.

A Young Comrade in Asia

Airport Workers Rap on Ideas in CHALLENGE

At the airport where I work, I ran into my friend, a black flight attendant for a major airline. I gave her the latest issue of CHALLENGE. She's fairly new to reading it and knowing about its communist politics.

She asked me: "Do you get paid for doing this? Do they pay you for making sure people read it?"

"No," I replied, "I'm not paid for getting CHALLENGE to airport workers. My incentive is political rather than monetary or material. I do this (as do other Party members) because I want to see a better world and future, especially for our children. That's my 'reward.' Some day, millions of workers will organize a communist revolution worldwide. In a communist society it will be, 'To each according to need' instead of capitalism's hellish system, ruled by the almighty dollar."

My friend noted, "This communist revolution may be far off in the future; you may not be around to see it."

I answered, "Hopefully communist revolution will begin in our lifetime, but if I'm not personally around to see it, the international working class still needs it, regardless of my personal physical presence. It would solve many of the working class's problems — racism, sexism, super-exploitation and imperialist war.

"We can and will have a communist society where workers' needs will be primary and where money doesn't exist. For 95% of our existence humankind has lived without money (primitive communism). Money or classes have been around for only a relatively short time. With all this advanced technology, the Party can envision communist society without money. All it takes is the political will to organize it!

"And just because something has not historically happened yet, it does not mean it can't."

My friend commented, "You know, maybe you have a good point about everything we talked about! I'll read CHALLENGE to learn more."

What comrade Marx said a long time ago was as true today as it was then — "When enough of the masses believe in an idea, then that idea will become a material force in the world." And so it will be with communism some day.

Airport Red

P.S. The following are excerpts of a draft resolution I circulated among workers at my airport for presentation in our union:

(1) Be it resolved we support the immigrant airport workers (undocumented and documented) at O'Hare International in Chicago who have been the victims of racist harassment by ICE (immigrant police). Immigrant or citizen workers should not respect our racist oppressors' national borders which only exist to divide us.

(2) Be it resolved we support our working-class African and Arab brothers and sisters in France who are fighting President Sarkozy's racist riot police and support the strikes of French workers fighting to not lose their union gains.

(3) Be it resolved we continue to offer our support to the "Jena 6" students of Louisiana, victims of the racist U.S. criminal (in)justice system.

Union Struggle Sparks Ex-Member to Nix 'Ex'

I work in a hospital in Brooklyn, New York, where I have been a union delegate for many years. I used to be a PLP member, but since leaving, I was lulled into complacency for a number of years. The war in Iraq and events with Hurricane Katrina woke me up.

CHALLENGE has been reporting in great detail about the step-up of racist killings by police nationwide and how racism is used in the rulers' plans for war and fascism. Recently, a PLP leader asked me to work on a resolution to condemn these racist murders and call for action to mobilize hospital workers and others around this issue.

When the issue was raised on my job, most of my co-workers were enthusiastic about it. A discussion at our hospital's delegates meeting was very positive. Another delegate and I were asked to write a resolution to be introduced to our union. In the process, I was able to introduce my fellow delegate to CHALLENGE and use the article regarding the recent shooting of Kheil Coppin as the basis of our resolution. The process of fighting around this reform issue has opened many doors for the introduction of the communist ideas of PLP.

Our resolution was brought to the December delegates' assembly after being approved unanimously by our hospital's delegates. A lot of diplomatic maneuvering was engaged in so that the resolution would make it to the floor for a vote. (The leadership of our local, 1199, is fearful of any proposal that they don't control or initiate.) The resolution was adopted unanimously. The fight now goes to put rank-and-file pressure on the leadership to act on the resolution.

As long as 1199's leadership leads this struggle together with politicians it will go nowhere. However, we can show the contradiction of reform versus communist revolution to our CHALLENGE readers and larger base of co-workers. It is the daily work of struggle one-to-one that will result in recruitment and building a mass party on the road to communist revolution. This is the area in which I need the most improvement.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the working class in this all-important struggle.

Thinking of rejoining

Deportation Terror Hits ALL Workers

I am an Ironworker working on a bridge spanning the Mississippi River, when the fascist Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raided our worksite. At the time I was working near a generator so I heard nothing. But I saw a group of guys running for the only way out. At first I thought a crane fell over or an accident happened, but it didn't take long to figure out La Migra had showed up. Even though they were on the opposite shore, it was enough to send immigrant workers running.

The purpose of these immigration raids is to terrorize all workers, and today they did a good job at accomplishing this. Those of us who stayed were jittery, nervous, and very angry. Black workers, the majority, were just as upset as white workers. Most of the immigrant workers who left were deck carpenters, and without them we couldn't proceed so after lunch the rest of us were sent home.

One layout carpenter told me that after the last ICE raid, about 6 months ago, the result was more speed-up for the remaining workers. This will probably be the result again after this latest attack.

There is only one-way to fight this terrorism and that is by patiently organizing to smash racism and the bosses, and organizing the entire working class



2007 May Day in Los Angeles, California

to fight for communism. Conditions are becoming worse with each passing day. The need to organize is becoming more urgent. I hope that many more will join PLP and actively fight for communism until we see it through. No half steps. Every day I become a little more committed. Things won't get better on their own.

Red Ironworker

Backs Proletarian Dictatorship All the Way

I was studying the recent history of some organizations on the left and was quite dismayed. Lutte Ouvrier (LO) of France renounced the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in favor of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat" in 2003. Years ago, I was a supporter of Spark in the U.S., which is in solidarity with LO.

Unfortunately, I was NOT surprised when they threw in the sponge. Decades of parliamentary cretinism finally took its toll.

When I discussed this with a representative of WSWS.org (Socialist Equality Party of the U.S.) he said they don't have the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as part of their program either. No kidding! He said that it caused "misunderstandings" or some such garbage.

I was taken aback by this because I found their website interesting. But they are not alone. Other "leftist" organizations have also renounced the dictatorship of the proletariat. The important thing is that there is no compelling reason for this!

Just consider. The bosses have created a situation of enormous concentration of wealth for themselves, at the direct expense of the rest of the society, the likes of which has not been seen in 80 years. They're running non-stop and never-ending wars based on obvious lies. There's been an unprecedented attack on civil rights. Medical care is terrible. Wages are stagnant. The list goes on and on. But at exactly this juncture, these guys are giving it up! That's very revealing.

However, there's one organization that would never consider such a thing — none other than the PLP! That's why I'm going to send the PLP a well-deserved contribution. Fight for communism!

RJ

High School Program Supports the Jena 6

A day of support for the Jena 6 was held at our high school in December. Many came with black arm bands in support of anti-racism and went to a teach-in, three students sang their own original song, another student performed a powerful spoken-word poem and a teacher did a rap. A parent of a former student gave the keynote speech about her visit to Jena to participate in the large, angry protest there in September, and she offered a first-hand account, along with a broad criticism of the unacceptable racial inequalities throughout the U.S.

The day's activities were sponsored by two organizations: the teachers' union chapter at our

continued on next page

school, and a club for students who write hip hop lyrics and poetry. These two did good work in the fight against racism: making over 200 armbands, selling them in many locations around our school, raising money for legal defense of the Jena 6, and providing MC's, poetry, singing, and hip hop for the teach-in.

Much of the organizing and leadership for the event was provided by student and teacher participants in a Progressive Labor Party (PLP) study group. These study group members worked hard to make the event a success, and they also planned to personally speak up at the teach-in, explaining the idea that racism is caused by capitalism, that all students and workers are badly hurt by it, and that all of us – including white workers – need to fight hard against racism. In addition, a member of PLP planned to explain that to completely defeat racism, revolution and communism are needed.

Red teacher

A Friend's Memory of Carson Beach: Boston Summer Project, 1975

I recently read the December 12th issue of CHALLENGE, "Battle of Carson Beach: Anti-Racists Send ROAR Thugs Running."

A friend of mine was at Carson Beach. He said, "I have a different memory of Carson Beach. That was a great day for demonstrating the power of multi-racial unity. INCAR had been following a strategy of multi-racial community organizing and anti-racist militance the entire summer, and the popularity of these ideas was growing. When we called for the "swim-in" to re-integrate Carson Beach, thousands came. However, most were under the direction of groups like the NAACP, which had initially opposed the swim-in. Recognizing the popularity of the swim-in idea, the big reform groups ultimately organized for it and, somewhat successfully, took away our leadership. And when the reform leaders and their police protection, which was massive, abruptly and unexpectedly abandoned the beach shortly after arriving, our very multi-racial INCAR group of approximately 200 was left to fight off overwhelming and simultaneous attacks from thousands of ROAR-organized thugs on one side and 50-100 black nationalists on the other. We fought courageously, but ultimately we retreated. The group I was with narrowly escaped. I cannot remember the exact outcome that day for everyone else, but my recollection is that there was absolutely no sense of INCAR having routed anyone, in regard to the headline in the December 12 Challenge story about Carson Beach, "Anti-Racists Send ROAR Thugs Running."

Stockton
CHALLENGE Reader

CHALLENGE COMMENT: The writer has a good point. A sentence in the body of the article may have created the impression that the combined forces of INCAR and PLP "routed" the ROAR fascists. This was a mistake. The headline contributed to it. The account given in the comments made by the writer's friend seems fair and accurate.

The Carson Beach events showed the power of multi-racial unity, in the face of heavily unfavorable odds. Arrayed against the INCAR and PLP demonstrators were several police forces (the state apparatus), the organized racist movement they protected (ROAR), and a group of equally well-protected nationalist thugs. Despite these odds, the bravery and resourcefulness of the outnumbered PLP'ers and INCAR members defeated the trap. The article was correct in making that point. We thank the writer for pointing out the error of the exaggeration.

AIDS Day Hears Revolutionary Message on Epidemic

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 1 – Several PLPers joined over 200 activists who rallied at the White House on Friday, November 30th for World AIDS Day, an annual rally to demand aggressive action against the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Our message to demonstrators — it will take revolution to defeat the racist neglect of AIDS! At the rally, we distributed CHALLENGES and flyers that urged our friends to join a PLP study-action group. Four of them attended the first meeting two weeks later. Activists need to stop trying to elect politicians or just promoting new HIV testing and educational programs. We need to figure out how to unite black, white, and immigrant workers for communism and the PLP so the working class can take power and reorganize society to meet the needs of our class.

The World AIDS rally demanded that the D.C. Board of Education approve comprehensive sex education for all students including safe sex, abstinence, and respect for gays, lesbians, and transgendered people. Since the rally, the Board has agreed in principle to require this. Demonstrators also demanded that the U.S. government end ridiculous restrictions on the $15 billion it provides to countries struggling with HIV that force them to use 1/3 of the prevention funds for abstinence-only programs and to limit outreach to women forced into prostitution.

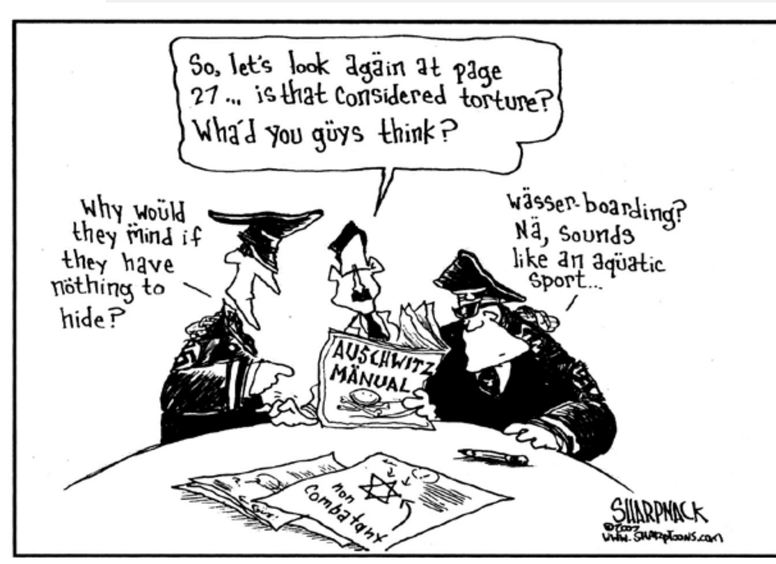
Forty people carried out civil disobedience around these demands, refusing to move from the White House sidewalk. Others maintained a steady stream of chants.

More activists are taking to the streets in D.C. to improve the health of all residents. Students from George Washington University continue to fight for drug treatment on demand and are helping the Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association organize a spring conference on substance use, HIV, and mental health. Another student group militantly picketed a CVS drug store in a black neighborhood demanding it unlock its condoms, chanting, "1 in 20 with HIV — CVS, Set the Condoms FREE!", and distributed free condoms to scores of people who stopped to talk to us.

The latest report from the D.C. Department of Health confirmed that 1 in 20 D.C. residents lives with HIV and 80 percent of people newly diagnosed are African American. HIV remains the leading cause of death for young black women and men nationwide. We urge other CHALLENGE readers to join the fight against HIV/AIDS and the capitalist system with its poverty, racism, homophobia and imperialist war that has made this disease into a global epidemic.✪



Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times



Gov't tears down New Orleans housing

NEW ORLEANS - At a moment when the shortage of low-income housing in the city is causing significant hardship, the federal government is beginning this week to tear down thousands of apartments in the city's four biggest public housing projects.

The plan is producing sharp opposition, which has escalated to include raucous demonstrations and, perhaps, threats of arson and other violence....

"They don't want this city to be for the poor, working-class people...." (NYT, 12/14)

Africa oil-rich, people desperate

At least 45 people were burned to death on the outskirts of Lagos when fuel they were siphoning from a buried pipeline caught fire. Nine out of 10 people in Nigeria, Africa's top exporter of crude oil, live on less than $2 a day, and many are prepared to take huge risks to obtain free fuel. (NYT, 12/27)

Creationism bamboozles educator

A Texas higher education panel has recommended allowing a Bible-based group called the Institute for Creation Research to offer online master's degrees in science education....

Asked how the institute could educate students to teach science..the state's commissioner of higher education...said, "I don't know. I'm not a scientist." (NYT, 12/19)

Belief in 'American Dream' falls

...Working families'...belief in that mythical dream that has sustained so many generations for so long is fading faster than sunlight on a December afternoon....Only 16 percent of [poll] respondents believed that their children's generation would be better off financially than their own.... 50 percent held the exceedingly gloomy view that today's children would be "worse off".... We're running on smoke and mirrors. (NYT, 12/22)

New lottery games hook the poor

With the popularity of traditional lotteries waning across the country, many states are turning to instant games priced at $20, $30 and as high as $50 to lure new players and raise revenue.

Scratch-off tickets....are to more likely to contribute to the kind of problem gambling that is usually associated with fast-paced casino betting....The games take particular advantage of the most vulnerable members of society, including the poor and members of minority groups.

Industry leaders agree that the future of the lottery business now depends on instant games....

"Scratch-off tickets are to the lottery what crack is to cocaine," said a State Senator.... (NYT, 12/27)

Both parties owned by the rich

...Readers...know, I am not a fan of the Republican Presidential candidates....I suppose you now imagine that I think the Democratic candidates are the cat's pajamas, a bunch of would-be philosopher-kings vying to lead us out of the wilderness.

Not even close. I think they tend to be professional politicians who have spent their political lives walking around with a tin cup, begging money from rich contributors. They have sold out so many times to so many people that they can hardly remember who owns them anymore. They just know it's not the American people.

...That's our system. If you don't do it you don't get to be a serious candidate for President. (P. Kaul, MinutemanMedia.org)

PL History:

Anti-Racists' Multi-Racial Unity Defies Rulers' Attacks

(*Last issue's article about the 1975 summer of struggle against racism in Boston recounted the rulers' unsuccessful red-baiting campaign against the Committee Against Racism and the PLP, and the cops' attempt to ban CAR — later known as INCAR, the International Committee Against Racism — from marching on City Hall with an anti-racist petition containing 35,000 signatures.*)

Early in the morning of August 18 — the planned march date — INCAR members and their lawyers went to court to enjoin the ban. The judge bent over backwards to help the cops' lawyers present their own case. But they had no case, even by the lopsided standards of capitalist "justice."

The cops' attorney was reduced to arguing that since the commissioner had already canceled the march, it was too late to assign enough police to manage it. This he argued despite the hundreds of uniformed and plainclothes cops stationed along the march's route at that very moment, waiting to prevent it.

In a public courtroom, the judge faced the alternative between flagrantly denying the right to free speech and assembly, supposedly "guaranteed" by the U.S. Constitution, and restoring the permit for the sake of protecting the system's democratic façade. This time, the mayor and cops had gone too far, even by their own standards. The judge regretfully revoked the ban, and 300 people marched. It was one of the summer's highlights. Thousands of workers watched from the street and shouted friendly encouragement to the demonstrators.

One speaker, INCAR's chairperson at the time, aroused a collective shout of militant anti-racist anger when he said: "We will turn ROAR into a mee-ow!" and then, pointing to Hicks, O'Neill, & Co., who were watching from their City Hall offices, led the demonstrators in collectively giving these fascists the finger.

After that march, most of the volunteers returned home to prepare for school openings. Some decided to remain in Boston to consolidate the gains made over the summer and to build both PLP and the anti-racist movement there. The project's final action came on September 8, the opening day of the 1975-76 school year. A year earlier, at the start of the busing program, ROAR thugs had thrown rocks at busses carrying young black schoolchildren into South Boston, Charlestown, East Boston, etc., and had otherwise conducted a racist rampage throughout the city, under the benevolent gaze of Boston's police. Having proven that the ROAR goons didn't reflect the views of most Bostonian workers, INCAR and PLP were now intent on organizing a demonstration for multi-racial unity outside South Boston High School on opening day.

'Having proven that the ROAR goons didn't reflect the views of most Bostonian workers, INCAR and PLP were now intent on organizing a demonstration for multi-racial unity outside South Boston High School on opening day.'



Two busloads carrying anti-racist black, white and Latino students and workers set out for "Southie" on the morning of the 8th. As the busses were crossing the bridge leading into South Boston, the cops pulled them over. A lieutenant named Bradley boarded and informed the anti-racists that they were all under arrest. "What for?" asked one of them, a final-year law student. "Well," answered Bradley, "you're not exactly creating a disturbance, but your presence could tend to create one." The law student retorted: "There's no such thing as 'tending to create a disturbance.' Your arrest is completely illegal." "Don't worry," chuckled Bradley, "we'll think of something."

Before depositing the demonstrators in a South Boston jail, the cops made a point of handcuffing them so tightly that many lost circulation in their wrists. On the way to the jailhouse, the demonstrators were treated to a volley of racist vulgarities from the cops in the front of the vans transporting them. Once the demonstrators were behind bars, a cop at the jailhouse greeted them by saying, "Comes the revolution, we'll kill every f------ one of you." No one was intimidated, and spirits remained high.

After spending the day locked up, the demonstrators were transported in police vans back to the Park Street subway station in downtown Boston. The cops' original plan had been to release them at dusk onto the South Boston streets, where they might have been easy prey for a cop-ROAR trap. At the request of a PLP member, who had spent a good part of the day befriending a public defender from behind bars, the lawyer agreed to accompany several shifts of demonstrators on the ride to Park Street. The thought was that with a public defender in the van as a witness, the cops wouldn't dare try their usual brutalities. This estimate proved correct. The demonstrators held a short, defiant rally at Park Street.

The public defender's courageous action had taught a valuable political lesson: sharp situations provide important opportunities to do the "right thing," and given the proper encouragement, many people can be won to rise to the occasion.

BOSTON 75 proved that under determined communist leadership, a relatively small number of militant anti-racists can put the rulers, their state apparatus and their gutter racist henchmen on the defensive. This was one of the project's important lessons. In the final installment, we will discuss others, including the crucial ones to learn from its weaknesses. ✪

NY Bosses Engineer Another Train Robbery: Hike Fares

NEW YORK CITY, December 21 — Another chapter in this city's Great Train Robbery is being written by the bosses' Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) upon their decision to raise subway and bus fares through the "back door."

Amid some big public relations hoopla by Gov. Eliot Spitzer about "freezing" the $2 fare — implying that there would be no fare hike — the MTA is increasing the unlimited monthly Metro pass by 6.6% to over $80. This despite their admission that it will have more than a half-billion dollar surplus at the end of 2007. Use of the straight $2 fare accounts for only 14% of transit revenues while the monthly pass brings in over 30%.

This fare hike will hit low-income families particularly hard, the greater proportion of which are black and Latino. It will become more difficult to buy the unlimited monthly Metro cards (with its discounts) since one must lay out a larger sum initially.

The racist nature of the increase is exposed in the MTA's raising commuter fares — used by an overwhelmingly higher-income white population — only half as much: 3.76%.

The MTA bosses' excuse for the fare raise is "to prepare financially for large deficits…in 2009….expected because of increased debt service." Debt service is the nice way of saying billions of dollars in interests to the banks. These, of course, are the same banks who have robbed homeowners of billions in the subprime mortgage scam and will try to recoup any bankers' losses by squeezing whatever they can out of the working class. Interest on transit "debt service" is the first expense the MTA must pay out, before operating costs, maintenance, workers' wages or anything else.

This is the way the capitalist system works: profits first, workers last. Mayor Bloomberg himself has a $6 billion fortune, stolen from the working class. No wonder we call it the dictatorship of the bosses. Only a workers' dictatorship through a communist revolution can end such robbery.

Transit fare hikes, mortgage foreclosures, mass layoffs and tax cuts for the rich suck money out of our class while the rulers spend $12 billion a month of our tax money on imperialist wars for control of oil in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The transit union leaders and other hacks utter hardly a whimper about these fare increases, much less organizing a mass campaign to oppose them. Instead they tell us to vote for a "lesser evil" politician to "save us" from such robbery. In many other countries like France, Italy and Brazil, despite the union sellouts, workers fight such hijacking of their pockets by taking to the streets, battling the cops and even burning buses and trains. U.S. bosses will get away with such robbery as long as we, the workers, let them. It's time we united our class in organized mass opposition to these attacks, one big step on the road to revolution to destroy this oppressive system. ✪